Will Your New Home *Really* be Energy-Efficient?

Money Isn't All You're Saving

Ask Your Builder These Key Questions:

☐ **Does the home come with an ENERGY STAR Certificate?** The ENERGY STAR Certificate assures you that the home has been verified to meet EPA's ENERGY STAR performance requirements. (An ENERGY STAR labeled home's predicted heating, cooling and hot water energy use is at least 30% less than a home based on the national Model Energy Code.) Please note that just because a home may have ENERGY STAR labeled products (e.g. windows, HVAC equipment, etc.), that does not mean it is an ENERGY STAR labeled home. ***If your builder answers "YES" to this question, you don't have to ask the rest of these questions!!***


Certificate of Validation

Sample Builder

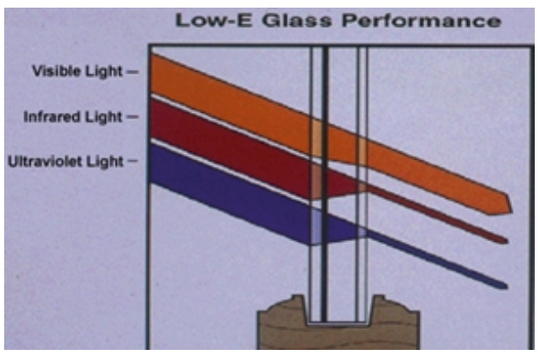
ENERGY STAR® for Homes

☐ **Is the duct work tightly sealed and sufficiently insulated? And has it been tested for air leakage?** Tightly sealed ducts are crucial to energy efficiency. In typical American homes, ducts leak 20-30% of the air forced through them. That means 20-30% of the money you spend to heat or cool your home is being wasted. With proper sealing, verified by a field test, you can substantially reduce these leaks.

☐ **Is the building envelope properly sealed and tested for air leakage?** The average home has hundreds if not thousands of small holes through which conditioned air can escape to the outside. Guess what! Those holes also allow a lot of unwanted things into your home: dust, pollen, insects, and moisture, to name a few. A tightly sealed and properly ventilated home will not only reduce your energy bills but also improve the quality of your indoor air.

☐ **Is the optimal amount of insulation used in the walls and attic and is it properly installed?** More insulation not only keeps the excessive heat or cold out, it also leads to more even temperatures between and across rooms. For insulation to work properly, it must be installed carefully with no gaps, crimping, or compression. This is especially important in areas where the insulation has to fit around obstacles such as in pipes and electrical wiring and outlets.

☐ **Are appropriate windows being used?** Window technologies have advanced dramatically in the last 10 years. And the prices on high technology windows have come down significantly. Houses in colder climates should have a low U-value that effectively resists thermal losses and prevents condensation on windows. In hot climates a home should have windows featuring a low Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC) that let visible light in but keep the heat out. Look for a window's NFRC rating to determine these characteristics or simply look for windows with the ENERGY STAR label.



☐ **Is the heating and cooling equipment highly efficient?** SEER 12 or higher air conditioners and a 90 AFUE or higher furnace qualify as ENERGY STAR labeled heating and cooling equipment. They can save you money, come with longer warranties and have fewer maintenance problems.

☐ **Is the home's heating and cooling (HVAC) equipment properly sized?** When a home is built with increased insulation, energy-efficient windows and tight (not leaky) construction, you need smaller equipment to keep the home comfortable. Just as a small lightweight car doesn't need as large an engine as a sport utility vehicle, an energy-efficient home doesn't need as large and expensive an HVAC system as a less efficient home. In addition, right-sized equipment will be more effective, maintain comfort levels and last longer.

For more information on ENERGY STAR labeled homes, or to find an ENERGY STAR partnered homebuilder, visit our Web site at www.energystar.gov/homes or call toll-free 1-888-STAR-YES (1-888-782-7937).